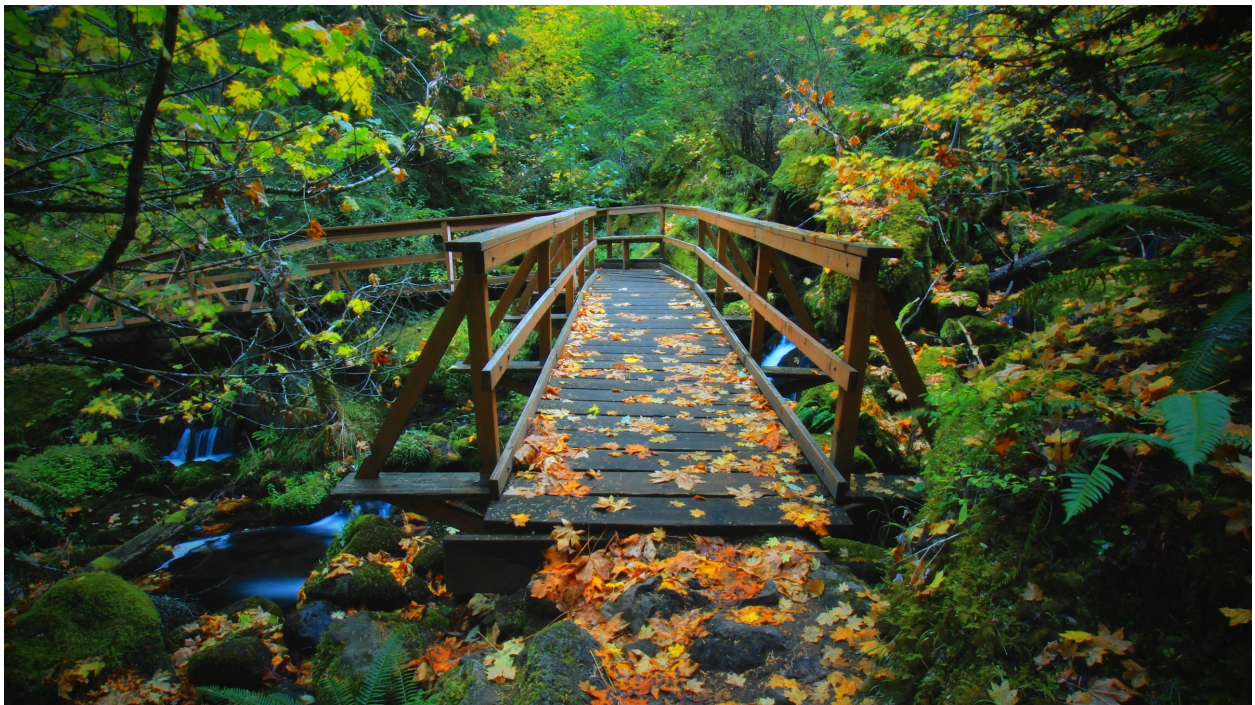

The Simple Jesus

A BRIDGE TO SIMPLIFYING YOUR WALK OF FAITH.



A book by John Fairrington; Commoner, Sinner, Saved by Grace!

1st Edition

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Preface

About the book

The Simple Jesus is a short excerpt from my life, taken from a period of time shortly after my depravity had reached its depth and my self-righteous pride had reached a pinnacle. It is about how the Lord positioned me to unpack my sin, rid myself of pride and religiosity, and the simplistic work of Jesus in my life. It is His work that has renewed my heart, robed me in righteousness, and set me on the path of simplifying my walk with Him.

It is not intended to be theological in its approach, or to propagate some new doctrine or movement. Simply put, it is about the opening moments of forgiveness, confession, justification, and the discovery of a simplistic way to walk with the Lord.

I have no credibility to claim, no pedigree, no plaques, and no authority worth speaking of. I am a lot like David, Gideon, and Samson. The only authority I claim is the Word of God and that I have finally come to grips with my story and where it fits in the story of Jesus, The Author and Finisher of our Faith along with an understanding of the path that I have been on.

If you are a person who has been plagued by sin and pride, if your walk feels complicated and empty or you feel distanced in your relationship with Christ, use this short read as a starting point and a handbook for getting back on track and returning to your first love. You are about 60 minutes from having a simple understanding and a simple walk. Take a few moments to see what simple faith produces, and why the work that Jesus did has me characterizing Him as... The Simple Jesus!

John Fairrington

Commoner, Sinner, Saved by Grace!

Introduction

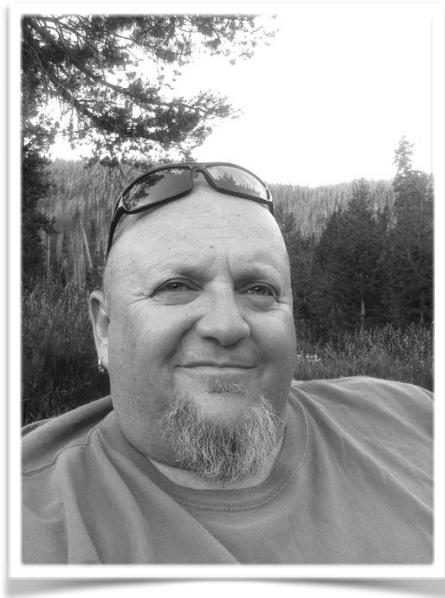
It is becoming increasingly harder for Christians to understand their purpose, lead their families, build their careers, and most importantly understand God's voice. *As time goes by, folks who gravitate towards religion rather than relationship begin to embrace perspectives that are not scriptural. They adapt scripture to propagate their spiritual pride. They then manipulate others with spiritual prowess and Biblical knowledge; every thing seems to be in its perfect place but, at their core there is a continual battle raging.* Our adversary is at war with us and wants to twist our understanding of God's Word. Perpetuated by misnomers and the selfish motivations of religious folk, our failure and lack of desire to drink from the cistern of the Water of the Word has left us dry. There are many believers today, some who are considered to be folks of profound faith that will tell you that where the Lord is leading them and how to navigate it all for His glory is foggy or indiscernible and that a walk of faith in Christ is difficult at best.

It has taken many years for me to understand the path that the Lord has had me on and for many those years in ministry, construction, and various other occupations I have stumbled on and off of it. After a season of repentance, confession, and devotion to renewing the simplicity of a walk with the Lord it has been on my heart to share the simple truths of Christianity; Simple Faith; and a genuine, intimate, real-deal relationship with Jesus; that for so many years had evaded me and clouded my walk with the Lord because of my own sinful pride.

God Justifies the Ungodly!

Here is the Good News, (Romans 3:20-4:5) *God justifies the ungodly who trust in him. God acquits the guilty!* While I have frequently stumbled in life, God has been gracious! This understanding is crucial to the success of folks who desire to walk closely with the Lord, and are wanting to enjoy their freedom to be who God created them to be but who struggle with depression, isolation, their own sins, hearing from the Lord, and moving past the mistakes

of their past. There are many who live in a perpetual state of condemnation or have been unable to accept forgiveness. They carry with them a constant reminder of their faults. This comes from many angles. Churches, family and loved ones, even friends often do not know how to navigate the messy side of forgiveness. Ultimately restoration through the justification of Christ is immediate but the rest of His followers have a tendency to dole it out over long periods of time and as they see fit. I have been on these types of journeys and have been learning how to walk in the full-on provisions of Christ. It is something that we as Christians need to revel in and I have committed to share this message with those who will hear it, one on one, and in simple settings. It is my story!



About the Author

John Fairrington is the owner of IRR - I Ride Rogue located in the Applegate Valley in Southern Oregon. It is a Motorcycle Adventure Touring Organization that centers on men who desire to know God and want to simplify their walk through exploration in the back country settings. Jesus often got away from the crowds to hang with the Father!
www.iriderogue.com

Getting Started

Read through this short documentation of my personal journey with the Lord over the last few years. Use it as a reminder, soak it in, allow it to change your perspectives, slow your roll, and enter into the refreshing rest that comes from a simple walk of faith with Jesus.

Chapter 1

Can a Walk of Faith Be Simple?

My Faith or, His Faithfulness?

2 Peter 1:1-4 (KJV)

1 Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:

2 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,

3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

Defining Simple Faith and My Discovery

I was never under the impression that my faith was simple! So, first it was important that I have a simplistic approach and understanding of what simple faith truly is and what it has provided for the sinner!

For too long now the Christian constituency has walked in perpetual defeat. I am amazed at how frequently we throw ourselves out there for examination from others and even more importantly the examination of self. I

have hated exams since my early adolescence! Perpetually being measured against something or someone else and attempting to dodge the pressure of standing out in performance, acceptance, and achievement.

Embedded in this realm of self-awareness is the unbiblical idea that we are to constantly reflect on our failures, inconsistencies, and repetitive sin nature. This forever keeps us off point. Simple faith, precious faith is living in and embracing the righteousness provided once and for all through the work of God and our Savior Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary. This Grace and peace is also perpetually multiplied through the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ.

That, folks, is what we are to examine. Are you walking in the simple faith that Jesus has provided everything pertaining to *“life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue”*?

I believe that the enemy of our faith catches us in a trap when we submit ourselves to a perpetual “I” exam! Peter gives encouragement that was never designed to be self examination or to put a noose around our necks. Rather, it was to focus us on the only thing that matters, the only thing that effectively finalizes my right standing with God as a sinner saved by Grace. You are the Righteousness of Christ because Jesus passed the test! There is no more self-examination, no more condemnation and no more on and off faith, based on how well you are doing at any given point in the day. For too long this has been the theological and doctrinal proclamation of those bound by their own self-righteousness and sin sniffing. Admittedly, I was once an authority on both of these prideful traits!

Examining Faith with Simplicity

It can be made simple! Start your day with the affirmation that you are in Christ! Ask yourself the question, has Christ died for me? Has He completely restored me to right standing before the Father and hidden me in himself? If the answer is yes then you pass the exam! Not only that, but even though you are a weakling, you have also graduated into living with Him by the Power of God toward you!

2 Corinthians 13:4

For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but we shall live with him by the power of God toward you.

Assignment

Take some time to let the reality of this passage soak in. Converse with the Lord and pray through each verse, every day until you can naturally defend the assault of self-righteousness and your adversary the Devil.

Chapter 2

Commoner, Sinner, Saved by Grace!

Unpacking My Flawed State!

So We All Can Relate!

How do I revel in Grace when being perpetually reminded of my sins? First, it is helpful to come to grips with the fact that we are all equally born into sin, equally can't fulfill the Law, and therefore equally depraved. All this time, I thought that I was just a special kind of stupid when it came to sin! As it turns out, we're all in the same boat!

Let me give you an understanding of what I have walked through as a commoner to prequalify what I am about to say to you. Please note that the intent is not to unearth a dead body here! The purpose is to simply identify everything that is common to man and relevant to the days we live in presently and to tell you my story so that may walk in newness and freedom in Christ.

I am a man with a call on my life. Understanding just what that looks like has been difficult and convoluted for most of my life. I can surmise that there are many reasons for this. Some of the reasons deal with influence, others deal with denomination, some with family or work, and some of it has to do with being gifted with the ability to do many things. But, the one major underlying factor running congruent with and intertwined in all of what I have done and where I have been is that of my own Sin. Ah... There it is! The S... word. I ever avoid it to place the blame on my surrounding circumstances.

With men, so often it is packed in an onboard characteristic called pride. From a young age we are taught to take pride in an assortment of things. We make them the object of our affections ultimately transferring our accomplishments to be a reflection of our self. It subtly roots itself into our very

make-up without us being aware it and then when it has its firm grasp, it manifests its ugly side in ways that clutter our ability to navigate life, make decisions, understand God's will, and walk in the freedom of simple faith and justification that comes by the work of Christ. (We will talk about this important matter later.)

How did this play out in my life? At a very young age I can remember the very first lesson on how to hide my sin. A periodical was sent to our door that was not intended for our address. It was pornography! Rather than being immediately disposed of, along with other mail it was quickly stashed and perhaps even forgotten about until I stumbled upon it. Needless to say, sin was introduced and I would deal with the consequences of it in many other areas of life simply because I did not have a good understanding of the work of Christ on the cross.

As time goes by Sin polishes and packages our pride to be the perfect bedfellow. If you are one of the folks who gravitate towards religion rather than relationship, it becomes easy to embrace perspectives that are not scriptural and embrace the mindset of adapting scripture to propagate our spiritual pride. We then manipulate others with our spiritual prowess and biblical knowledge; every thing seems to be in perfect place while at our core there is a continual battle. A battle for a right spirit, a clean heart, a clear conscience, where our very freedom seems to escape us at every turn leaving us confused, bitter, worked up, judgmental, isolated and alone.

This is where I found myself, disillusioned with ministry, unable to track the right path, the narrow path, and the old path of the Lord. I was buried in sin and pride to the point that it had affected those around me. At the point that spiritual pride had unraveled me internally, life around me began to unravel. In a season when I should have been at my best, I allowed myself to walk in weakness. What follows is the short list for your comparison. I experienced all of these things and more.

My wife was diagnosed with cancer

A life friend was almost killed in a logging accident

Multiple family members had major surgeries and needed care

We went through a bankruptcy

We moved. And then we moved again.

We pastored a church. We dissolved the church and then went to some other churches.

My Father-in-law passed away

Walked a daughter and grandson through divorce and eventually remarried them.

We grieved and prepared my Mother-in-law for doing life on her own

Struggled with intimacy in our marriage

Spiritual pride had kept people at a distance in my life

I landed a new job and lost it again in a 6-month time span.

I was diagnosed with Fibromyalgia. constant pain, stress, anxiety, and the combination of drugs for my illness all left me with memory loss, confusion, and a mental fog, while the medications left me suicidal.

Both my spouse and I cultivated emotional affairs. The enemy convinced me that she would not live and I succumbed to the flattery and affections of another woman that led to inappropriate actions.

I was alone, confused and suicidal and nobody knew. I felt like nobody cared. I finally realized that the Lord had brought me to this deep chasm of emptiness in my life in order to free me from the bondage of spiritual pride and self-righteousness that was ultimately trying to kill me.

As a result of all of this and more, my discretion and ability to do what was right had been refashioned into the justification of my flawed state and blindness to my own sin. My loneliness and lack of intimacy in my relationship with God and my wife led to finding satisfaction elsewhere and the outcome ultimately destroyed relationships and trust. After having walked with others for many years, very few knew our struggles and we came to the realization that Jesus was the only one who could fix us.

God Had a Purpose!

When I began to repent, my eyes were opened to not only my own depravity but I began to see the flaws in how we as believers navigate unbiblical perspectives handed down over generations and the impact that it has had on the church, our families, and each other. Justification at the foot of the cross is a level playing field. The sins of the accusers are just the same as the accused. This is especially hard for the religious to wrap their heads around. Even today there are only a handful of people I know who can and are willing to walk along side of us through this process. Even to this day many of the folks who were co-laborers in ministry or were asked to be a part of mutual accountability partnerships and who heard my confession have had little contact with me. There are many who teach and understand the biblical principles of Romans and the wonderful work of grace and justification but, very few who follow the patterns of Jesus and the 2 Corinthian perspective of Paul. Religious leaders can often be found rallying to the cause of the offended and hoping that the sin factor will just go away. Religious protocol is followed forgetting the fact that we all deserve the penalty of death as much as we all get to experience and receive restoration at the foot of the cross. Let me go on record and say that this is not the case or characteristic of the church we presently attend.

How Do We Know That We Are All Guilty?

Psalm 51:3-5

3 For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.

4 Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.

5 Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.

David took responsibility for his sin. “Against Thee, Thee only have I sinned,” he said. Sin declares guilt.

People will ask, “What about Uriah and Bathsheba?” “Didn’t David sin against them?”

They were innocent victims perhaps but sinners nonetheless. We rush to place blame, thinking there must be someone who is wrong and someone who is innocent. But that's not scriptural, for we're all guilty (Romans 3:23). We're all in need of salvation. Nevertheless, so often the victim is embraced with open arms and the offender is left to isolation.

It's Not That Way with Jesus!

Romans 3:21

But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets.

1. Justification is apart from the law. If you're trying to relate to the Father on the basis of your own goodness or devotion, your consistency or your Bible study, your do's and don'ts—you'll never be justified. The law cannot justify you. It can only bring you to the realization that you are a sinner in need of a Savior.

Romans 3:22

Even the righteousness of God which is by faith...

2. Justification is by faith in the Lord. Our justification comes from our being linked not to God generally, but to Jesus Christ personally. Do you have a general relationship where you say "I'm religious," or, do you have an intimate relationship with the Lord. James says the demons believe in God, but they're not saved. They're not justified. They won't be in heaven (James 2:19). It's not enough for a person to say, "I believe in God and go to church." No, he must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ because the source of justification lies embedded in the Person and work of Jesus.

Romans 3:22 (cont.)

...of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference.

3. Justification is for everyone. Whether Jew or Gentile, yuppie or hippie, heathen or Hebrew—there's only one way to enter into salvation: by faith. It's not faith in what you've done or who you are, it's not my fickle faith in Jesus Christ. Simply put, it is just believing that it is the faithfulness of Jesus towards me, in me, and for me. And that he loved me while I was ungodly so much so that He gave up his own life so a wretch like me could have new life being perfectly, completely and instantaneously justified!

If you are a man or woman who has been weighed down with sinful pride then I hope that this will be a fresh starting point for you. It really is simple! And although there may be few around you who understand what you are going through, know this, if you can just place your faith in the faithfulness of Jesus and you can confess your sins and failures right now, it will put you back on the right path, the narrow path, the old path and you can take your next steps being fully, instantaneously, and gloriously justified through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ. Simple!

2 Corinthians 11:3 (KJV)

But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

Christ puts simplicity and peace into our faith and for you who have walked in condemnation from your sins and failures, Jesus has declared you the innocent ones. Don't allow anyone to subtly corrupt your new found simplicity in Christ.

Assignment

1. Revel in it! Sin has declared guilt but Christ has declared innocence!
2. Make your own list and give all of it to the Lord. You no longer walk after the flesh but with a focus on Jesus and after the infilling of His Spirit.

Romans 8:1 (KJV)

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Chapter 3

Focus on the Faithful One

Your Miracles Await!

Here's Spit in Your Eyes!

Have you ever wondered “Why did Jesus use spit for some of His miracles?” Our pastor Ben touched on this some time ago and because I am a big proponent of a walk of simple faith, I have often pondered this subject.

It was Near Decapolis that some people brought Jesus a deaf man who could hardly talk. Jesus healed the man, of course, but in an interesting manner; “Jesus put his fingers into the man’s ears. Then he spit and touched the man’s tongue” (Mark 7:33). Later, in the town of Bethsaida, Jesus healed a blind man. Again, the miracle was preceded by spitting: “He... spit on the man’s eyes and put his hands on him” (Mark 8:23). To heal a man born blind, Jesus “spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man’s eyes” (John 9:6).

Certainly, Jesus, the divine Son of God, does not need physical props to work miracles. In many cases, Jesus merely spoke, and healing followed (Matthew 15:28; Luke 17:12-14). Yet, in three cases, Jesus used His spittle in the process of healing. One possible reason for Jesus’ use of His saliva has to do with the beliefs of His contemporary culture. Several Roman writers and Jewish rabbis considered saliva to be a valid treatment for blindness. Since the people of that day had a high view of saliva’s healing properties, Jesus used spit to communicate His intention to heal. Those being healed would have naturally interpreted Jesus’ spitting as a sign that they would soon be cured.

Who's Faith Is Really At Work Here?

Now the verse that really jumps out at me is the one in Mark 8:23. It says, “And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw ought.”

There are those who would say that the greater need of each of those who were healed required the need for increased, proportional faith. I like to work through this perspective differently than others may so allow me to break it down this way.

It was the Faith of Jesus that produced the miracle, not the profound faith of the person being healed.

Think Through This With Me

One thing to consider is that each individual was equally faithless; otherwise they all would have already been healed. Then, there is the matter of spit. The last time someone spit in your eye... Did it get your attention? I believe the whole point was not to increase their faith but rather to get them to put their focus on the One who is Faithful!

For too long in life I have tried to increase my faith, speak things into existence, exert my own spiritual fortitude. Could it be that Jesus the Faithful One just wants my focus and attention? Could it be that all this time He has been taking me away from the common beliefs on matters of profound faith to get me alone, to redirect my focus off of the issues and the questions about how I am going to survive or get through the day and simply put my focus on Him?

You see... When we are weak He is Faithful!

2 Tim 2:13 NIV

“if we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot disown himself.”

Could it be that the key to seeing increased but simplistic faith produced in my life is as simple as getting away with Jesus? 1 Corinthians 1:9 says,

“God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.”

In Mark 8, Jesus called this blind, faithless man away. He literally takes him by the hand and leads him out of town away from all other influence and the man begins to connect what little faith he has to the One who is faithful. Look at the flow in the process of developing simple faith. Let it saturate your heart.

First, Jesus, after spitting in this man’s eyes and putting His hands on the man, asked him, “Do you see anything?” I like that! Jesus is not expressing His own lack of faith, instead He is taking this man on a journey of anticipation and simple expectation that the work is being done. He is learning to lean on and depend on Jesus and His faithfulness. Slowly, the man begins to get it. Things are still fuzzy but he realizes there is something happening in His life. Jesus now puts His hands on the blind man’s eyes and he is fully restored.

The real miracle is not the physical eyesight being restored. It is this man embracing and understanding what a walk of simple trust and faith in Jesus is! Once this happens, Jesus tells the man, “Don’t go back!”

Mark 8:23-26 (KJV)

23 And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw ought.

24 And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking.

25 After that he put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly.

26 And he sent him away to his house, saying, neither go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town.

I have a real tendency to revert back to the old perspectives that would imply that my profound faith had something to do with a needed miracle. I have an old cowboy poem called Jake the Rancher. It was handed down to me

by Gayle Erwin and is a perfect example of the misunderstandings we cultivate concerning the Simplicity of the work of Jesus.

Jake, The Rancher

Jake, the rancher, went one day to fix a distant fence. The wind was cold and gusty and the clouds rolled gray and dense. As he pounded the last staples in and gathered tools to go, The temperature had fallen and the snow began to blow.

When he finally reached his pickup, he felt a heavy heart, from the sound of that ignition, he knew it wouldn't start. So Jake did what most of us do, if we'd have been there He humbly bowed his balding head and sent aloft a prayer.

As he turned the key for the last time, he knew he'd lost his luck, They found him three days later, frozen stiff in that old truck. Now Jake had been around in life and done his share of roamin' But when he saw Heaven, he was shocked -- it look just like Wyomin'.

Oh, there were some differences of course, but just some minor things, One place had simply disappeared -- the town they called Rock Springs. The BLM had been shut down, and there was no grazin' fees, and the wind in Rawlins and Cheyenne was now a gentle breeze. (cont...)

The Park and Forest Service folks -- they didn't fare so well, They'd all been sent to fight some fire in a wilderness called Hell. Though Heaven was a real nice place, Jake had a wondering mind, So he saddled up and lit a shuck, not know'n what he'd find.

Then one day up in Cody, on a cold fall afternoon, He saw St. Peter coming, and he knew he'd be there soon. Of all the saints in Heaven, his favorite was St. Peter, Now, this line, it ain't needed but it helps with rhyme and meter.

So they set and talked a minute or two, or maybe it was three, Nobody was keepin' score -- in Heaven time is free. "I've always heard," Jake said to

*Pete, "that God will answer prayers, But one time I asked for help, well he
just plain wasn't there.*

*Does God answer prayers of some, and ignores the prayers of others? That
don't seem exactly square -- I know all men are brothers. Or does he
randomly reply, without good rhyme or reason? Maybe, it's the time of
day, the weather or the season.*

*Now I ain't trying to act smart, it's just the way I feel, And I was
wonderin', could you tell -- what the heck's the deal? Peter listened very
patiently and when Jake was done, There were smiles of recognition, and
he said, "So, you're the one!*

*That day your truck, it wouldn't start, and you sent your prayer a-flying,
You gave us all a real bad time, with hundreds of us a trying. A thousand
angels rushed to check the status of your file, But you know, Jake, we
hadn't heard from you in quite a while*

*And though all prayers are answered, and God ain't got no quota, He
didn't recognize your voice, and started a truck in North Dakota.*

Author Unknown

As humorous as it may seem, we go through life absent of the peace and rest that comes from the faithful one!

Now, to further illustrate what simple faith is and that it has nothing to do with my merit, tune in to this for a moment. I was seated on the throne in the back throne room the other day pondering all the places I had looked for my keys over the last 45 minutes while I did my morning business. I was late, frustrated, and had given up all hope when from my lofty perch, I threw up a prayer for a miracle. "Jesus," I said, "You alone hold the keys, now would you help me find mine?" Three minutes later I had my keys and was on my way. I have had this scenario play out more times than I can count now! It is not because of my spiritual prowess or posture, rather, it is because of his faithfulness.

Assignment

Ponder...

- Is Jesus calling you away to a walk of simple faith, simple focus?
- Have you been striving towards the production of some kind of profound faith in your life?
- Just focus on Him, Your miracle waits!

Simple Faith and Matters of Conscience

A Perfect Conscience

A Cricket Tried To Kill Me!

Quoting from Peter John Courson, the statement “Always let your conscience be your guide, is a profound one if you are a singing cricket with a top hat!” UI personally believe that ultimately, if that perspective becomes one of your core beliefs, it will only produce depression, anxiety, and a trip to the loony bin. Scripture is right when it proclaims that “there is a way that seems right unto man.” That kind of pride and self-dependency just about killed me. A dependence on your self-proclaimed prowess and matters of conscience will produce the kinds of beliefs that will lead you off course in your simple and restful walk of faith.

Contrary to the hyper-spiritual concepts we have embraced, the Bible has a much different view on the matter. It tells us that while your conscience may be a good helper, it is also a harsh master. Whenever there are negative implications linked with conscience in the Bible and when words like sinful, evil, defiled or seared are used in conjunction with conscience, it always pertains to the self-effort of one who is striving to appease their conscience apart from the finished work of the Cross. The only way sinful man can have a perfect conscience is by having it covered with the blood of Christ. When we look at The Book of Hebrews in the Bible, any other conscience is a “sinful” conscience and it always results in “dead works.” When I engaged in works to appease my conscience, those works become tainted and impure in motivation. In my spiritual pride I thought I could fix people, denominations, and the church. These perspectives are a direct result of compensating for sin or failures and thus become self-serving at their very foundation. Simply put, this

kind of conscience and core belief is nothing more than a mission of self-righteousness because it doesn't come from a pure conscience.

Just a few Examples and Statements of a self-righteous conscience (See more in Galatians 5):

- I'll do better this week!
- I'll show them!
- If that's how they feel then I'll just write that person off!
- So and so, said this, about them, and I believe it
- This sermon doesn't apply to me!
- When you hear statements like "It's Just Jesus" or, "There is nothing you can do," It really ticks you off because you've been working overtime to impress Him or to be like Him.
- You think Grace is earned in some way.
- Trying to prove yourself to others exhausts you!
- You think constantly about how you are perceived and what others think about you.
- You can't forgive or accept that His blood has changed someone else on the inside.
- You rely on outward signs in others and not the inward work that the Blood does before you will accept them.
- You are all too willing to report the spiritual status of others without discerning their heart or walking alongside of them. (See 2 Corinthians and Paul's thoughts on that).
- You are on a mission to fix everyone but yourself, a job for only Jesus!

What the Bible does refer to, as a pure conscience is one that is absent of ulterior motives and hidden agendas. That can only stem from a "perfect" conscience. Simply put, it is in resting in the Finished Work of the Cross that our conscience finally finds perfection and rest and we are freed from the mind numbing guilt, depression, and self-righteous spirit that will drive us straight to the mental ward.

1 Corinthians 15:10 KJV

[10] But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

Despite my newfound conscience and a changed heart there are still some who would say that I am a botched up mess and that I don't warrant or deserve grace on any level. I say, and they would be right! But here is the deal, I am what I am by His grace! It wasn't something I acquired or earned, or even traded up for. It was given freely to me by the Lord and not in vain as some would suspect. After Jesus had called Lazarus forth, Lazarus' sisters were given the responsibility of simply removing his grave cloths. I am most certain that he had a look of death about him and quite possibly a stench about him while still wrapped up in the rags of his past. But they didn't say we can't be around him nor, did they take the position that Jesus hadn't really brought life to one who was once dead. To often we disassociate with people who have been brought to life but are still in their grave cloths. The fact of the matter is, we are all packing around a few pieces of the old wrappings. Try not to be so offended by my old grave cloths that you won't fellowship with me, lest we make the grace which was bestowed upon each of us in vain. I simply need help to get these grave cloths off! And by the way... So do you!

Now I am free to live in His grace and with a clean conscience but my labor characteristics have changed! Now I labor even more! Not to boast in my self righteous pride or to be a spiritual authority and not for the sake of laboring to be recognized by my good works but now I labor to stand firm in the grace that is with me and unto rest in the work that His grace is already doing! Furthermore I can rest in knowing that He has bestowed His grace upon you too and that it was not in vain!

2 Corinthians 12:9 KJV

[9] And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

The work is done and the rest has begun! His strength has been made perfect while your grave cloths and you are at your weakest point. Yes I have failed and so have you so let's together glory in the fact that even though our inadequacies the power of Christ is resting upon us!

Be free, keep your faith simple, and walk in forgiveness with a clean, perfect conscience, through the Shed Blood of Jesus Christ today! Anything else, tramples on Jesus the One who became sin, the One who became me, the One who stood in our place and took all of Gods wrath so that you and I could be free from the guilt, condemnation, and judgment that we deserved. Why would we ever want to deprive ourselves of such amazing grace? Unless of course our confidence is rooted in the strength of our own flesh.

Assignment

The purpose of this chapter is to unpack the sin of spiritual pride and self-sufficiency and to remove your grave cloths.

Stop everything you are doing and become obedient only to your newfound friend Jesus. It may feel like you have stopped everything but don't proceed until He moves you.

- Keep practicing your dependency on Him
- Practice until your life is just a response to what He is doing!
- Enjoy your newfound Rest!!!

Chapter 5

My Favorite Teacher

The one who tied my shoes and zipped my britches!

Never did I fully understand the impact that a single person could have on my life until I met my Kindergarten teacher. She was the epitome of Grace and it's work in the lives of those who lack understanding on matters of navigating life. You know... like tying your shoes and zip'n your pants. I truly would have stumbled around or exposed myself much worse in life, had it not been for the teacher of grace that she was in my formative years. She in my kindergarten year was the object of my affection and in my eyes the most beautiful person on the planet. She had a way at putting me at ease when it came to learning my letters and how to spell my last name. You see, I had come to the conclusion that life as I new it would be insufferable and difficult for me. I would never make it into the first grade with a last name like Fairrington. My buddy had been blessed with the good name of Cox. Three letters to my Eleven!!! He could sign his name to his papers and be done with his work while I was still writing out my last name. In a world that seemed so unfair, there was only one thing that would get me through to the next grade. It was Grace! Grace that would teach me, Grace that was slow to anger, Grace that would teach me how to keep from stumbling, grace that covered me when I was exposed and feeling unworthy. Yes, it was Grace! Teaching me then and it is Grace that teaches us all how to walk in Godliness.

Titus 2:11-14 (KJV)

***For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,
Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live
soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;***

Grace is what brings Holiness. It does not demand anything from us. Its work is done for us. I thought it would be something more along the lines of me proving to you that its work is present in my life. I thought it was based on an evaluation of my performance by others. I thought that it could only be substantiated by the recognition, evidence and validation of those who have been wounded by me before I could move on. Now some would say that this is just another way to embrace sloppy grace and continue in sin but look at what the verse says. "Grace teaches us to be Holy", "Grace teaches us how to say no to sin" More than the Law, More than Religion, More than my self-righteousness, More than my commitments, covenants, piety, or performance, more than anything else Grace is teaching me to be Holy. It is teaching me how to not stumble! This is why we forgive one another, This is why we love each other through the ugliness of life. When I really grasp that God is gracious and slow to anger in my heart, it doesn't cause or encourage me to sin more, it causes me to sin less. So my understanding of grace is that it is provided not because of sin and not so we can continue in sin, but it teaches us so that we can know how to say no to sin.

when you finally realize you are kindergartner and in the most unqualified state for God's favor and yet have received the teacher of grace anyway, now all you want is to rest and to walk in the ways of God because His grace is the teacher and she is beautiful, and loves you, and makes you feel as if you are the most important kid in the room!

The Holiest thing you can do is to rest in the finished work of the cross of Christ. You cannot add to Jesus' work. When we rest from our own works in order to merit God's favor and blessings, we are honoring Jesus for a job well done!

No more effort on my part. Its all Him, all Jesus.

Never let anyone make you feel guilty for resting in His Grace. It is teaching us to be Holy!

Chapter 6

Simple Faith's Relationship to Righteousness

You Just Got Out of An Exam!

2 Peter 1:1-4 (KJV)

1 Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ:

2 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,

3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

I Hate Tests!

Now that we have unpacked our pride and nothing is left to get in the way, we can begin to develop a basic understanding of what simple faith truly is and what it has provided for the sinner!

For too long now the Christian constituency has walked in perpetual defeat, I am amazed at how frequently we throw ourselves out there for examination from others and even more importantly the examination of self. I have hated exams since my early adolescence! Perpetually being measured against something or someone else and attempting to dodge the pressure of standing out in performance, acceptance, and achievement. Embedded in this realm of self-awareness is the unbiblical idea that we are to constantly reflect on our failures, inconsistencies, and repetitive sin nature. This forever keeps us off point in that; simple faith, precious faith is living in and embracing the righteousness provided once and for all through the work of God and our Savior Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary. This Grace and peace is also perpetually multiplied through the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ.

That folks, is what we are to examine. Are you walking in the simple faith that Jesus has provided everything pertaining to *“life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue”*?

Avoid “I” Exams

I believe that the enemy of our faith catches us in a trap when we submit ourselves to a perpetual “I” exam! Peter gives encouragement that was never designed to be self examination or to put a noose around our necks rather, it was to focus us on the only thing that matters, the only thing that effectively finalizes my right standing with God as a sinner saved by Grace. You are the Righteousness of Christ because Jesus passed the test! There is no more self-examination, no more condemnation and no more on and off faith, based on how well you are doing at any given point in the day. For too long this has been the theological and doctrinal proclamation of those who like myself were entrenched in self-righteousness and sin sniffing.

So How Do I Examine My Faith in Simplicity?

Simple! Start your day with the affirmation that you are in Christ! Ask yourself the question; Has Christ died for me? Has He completely restored me to right standing before the Father and hidden me in himself? If you haven’t started your relationship at His table or communion with Him in this way, then

I suggest that you get in the habit of doing so. If the answer is yes to the question then, you pass the exam! Not only that, but even though you are a weakling, you have also graduated into living with Him by the Power of God toward you!

Assignment

Take some time to let the reality of these two passages soak in. Converse with the Lord and pray through each verse, every day until you can naturally defend the assault of self-righteousness and your adversary the Devil.

2 Corinthians 13:3-6 (KJV)

3 Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, which to you-ward is not weak, but is mighty in you.

4 For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but we shall live with him by the power of God toward you.

5 Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

6 But I trust that ye shall know that we are not reprobates.

P.S. It doesn't take long to wrap your brain around this new, and fun way of kicking the enemy in the backside!

Chapter 7

Fight the Good Fight of Faith!

Develop a Defense against the Enemy

The Pit of Despair

It is a real tendency among men to want to defend anything that compromises their territory, relationships or honor. From a very young age we are poised to give an answer for our actions. In many instances we have all heard the proverbial question, “What do you have to say for yourself?” This leads us to believe that we better have a good excuse for our sin and instills in us the trigger to immediately cover up and justify our unrighteousness. Without an understanding of who God is and what He has done on our behalf, we move into the abyss of self justification and moral depravity, spinning endlessly, deeper into a web of lies and deceit, ultimately unable to see who we really are or have become. The defense of our own lives eventually becomes spiritual pride and legalism where we are the only ones who are right and everyone else doesn’t get it. It generally takes a devastating event in life to pull us back into recognition that we have taken the work that only Christ can do into our own hands.

The characteristics of this kind of lifestyle naturally generates an unhealthy view of world, family, friends, leadership, and the church. Everyone becomes suspect, some become judge and jury, and the very things that you yourself have become are now identified as sin in others. In most cases we become prone to conjecture and unable to see others through the lens of Christ and the work of the cross.

My Adversary's New Enemy

Once we begin to recognize that the pit of despair is too deep for anyone to crawl out of on their own, it leaves us with a host of decisions on how to proceed. If you have been a Christian like me for most of your life or even if you have been one for a short time, the accuser starts his attack almost immediately and we must decide right then whom we will listen to. This is a pivotal point in Christianity where you now choose how you will live, how you will love and whether you can walk in the profound simplicity of Jesus. I didn't make that move until most of the damage had been done! In my personal experience I found that many around me loved the broken and contrite heart. They rally behind your new found desire for change. Others may have a harder time trusting the reality of your change. There is always the potential to fade into the backdrop where no one is bothered with the messiness of your sin whether it be by your own withdrawal or by others withdrawing from you. All that is to not to fault anyone but is to say that this is where you and I make the glorious switch from defending ourselves to the defense that Jesus provides. He becomes the new enemy of our adversary!

1 Peter 5:8 (KJV)

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

Jesus our Advocate and Our Defense

As you have gathered by now, Jesus is the central component of your success. It will not come through your peers, accountability partners, psychology, counseling, or by the opinion others have of you. The self-righteous man is just as guilty, if not more so, than the unrighteous individual. In the story of the prodigal son, who was guiltier? Was it the prodigal who spent time in the pigpen and came back repenting, or the elder son who complained and murmured because his father never killed a fatted calf for him? The heathen and the Hebrew alike are without excuse. One might sin in the flesh, the other

in the spirit—but both sin. Only God sees what’s going on internally, only He can judge righteously.

Too often, regardless of being the Hebrew or the one in the pigpen, we’re so sure we’re right—when in reality we don’t have all of the facts. In the Day of Judgment, we will be shocked at how wrong we were and how little we knew when all the books are opened and all things will be judged truthfully. Watch out for the self-righteous person. They are the ones who perhaps are most vulnerable to despising the goodness of God when their brothers are glorifying God fresh out of the pigpen. Despising the goodness of God happens all too frequently when grace is extended to people who come from the pigpen, and the self-righteous gather in their own spiritual pride and begin to manipulate the work of grace to their benefit, not seeing their own depravity. You must now rely solely on the work of your new advocate Jesus.

For more biblical confirmation, revisit Chapter 2 of this book and Romans 3:21-22.

Do You Let Him Fight All Your Battles?

I remember this question being sarcastically thrown out there as a child when defending my little brother. Do you let Him fight all your battles? It never bode well for his would be attacker!

One of the Adversary’s primary objectives is to destroy your simple faith in God. His intricate schemes and hidden diabolical drive is focused on one thing: diminishing the power of the Word of the Lord by undermining our trust in it. The very universe itself along with everything in it was created and is upheld by the Word of God according to John 1:3 and Hebrews 1:3, so in order for Satan to win, his efforts must be centered on discrediting the simple and freeing Good News of the Gospel.

Will the Real You Please Stand Up!

The enemy constantly seeks to alter our perception of reality. This is why so often we are prone to believe his condemnations rather than the Word of God, which frequently points to our righteousness in Christ being secured and

in play while grace and peace are perpetually being multiplied to the weak! Stand up, Stand firm! Don't allow the enemy to convince you that it isn't real or that a glorious work hasn't been done on your behalf.

Liar, Liar, Pants on Fire!

The enemy seeks to distort the truth. He does this by making destructive things look enticingly desirable. He seeks to make the most wonderful things look unbearably boring and dull. He seeks to make the most trustworthy things look unreliable through conjecture. He seeks to make the one, true fountain of joy look like a dry well, and a broken cistern look like a spring of refreshment. He will even try to convince you hell is entertaining.

Ever Been Lost?

It is the enemy's tactic to cause disorientation through temptation, condemnation, intimidation discouragement, disappointment, doubt, illness, weakness, weariness, and to appeal to our pride and shame. The spiritual powers of evil seek to keep us off-balance, confused, and turned around. If we lose our focus on the truth, we lose our sense of direction and confidence in God, which ultimately leads to losing the simple faith that we have been chosen to walk in.

You Have a Map, Use It!

You should no more try to find your own way through life than you should try to take a long trip without a map. While traveling along a road, you can only see what's around you moment by moment. But if you'll look at the MAP and have faith in it, you can also see where the road came from, regardless of where you started out yourself. And even if you've never been to your final destination or travelled that road before, you can know where the road is going and where it's supposed to end. But if you don't take time to

study the map you could waste an awful lot of time or maybe even ruin your chances of getting to your destination at all! Just as you must look at the map, believe it's true and follow it to get where you're going, if you will take God's Word, believe that it is for you, read it and follow it, you'll always come out in the right place at the right time! He not only knows where you are right now, where you came from, and your past, but He knows where you're going!

Your Loved Ones are Not The Enemy!

The enemy is the conjurer of suspicion and he accomplishes this by infiltration into our relationships. He does this by boosting our pride in our own flesh, making it much easier to be an examiner than an exhorter in the lives of those close to us. He seeks to pervert the exchange of trust between our loved ones and us. Marriages break, families fracture, friendships rupture, churches split, movements derail as sin infects, and suspicion breeds. In the skirmish we easily lose track of who the enemy really is and end up fighting against flesh and blood. Remember! Your loved ones are not the enemy! In fact, I would say that You, just like them are all they what Jesus demonstrates over and over again that He is most attracted to. Who are we" you may ask.

Who am I? Who are we?

I'm a leper, eaten by my own carnality. But the Lord comes to me every day and says, 'I still love you. I'm here to cleanse you.'

I'm a dummy. My brain gets cluttered with news, philosophy, and the ideas of the world. I'm gullible and tend to believe the lies of the enemy or what others say or think about me but, then Jesus shares with me by His Spirit through the Word of God and suddenly I hear Him again.

I'm the adulterer. My affections and priorities wander in all sorts of directions. Pride, affection, success, flattery, become my affairs and yet Jesus comes to me and says, 'You've strayed from Me'. But I don't condemn you. I'm here to stand by you. Go your way. Sin no more. You're free.'

I am the Hungry! Not for food as much as starved for attention, control, and satisfaction. These are the cravings of a sinful man and yet the Lord comes to me daily and nourishes me as I partake of the Bread of Life.

I'm am childish and most of the time the more distinguished folks would rather not have me smelling up the room or messing up the décor so they just say, 'Don't bother with him, maybe he'll go away' but then Jesus says, 'Allow him to come to Me.'

I am a cripple, different in every way than everyone else but fearfully and wonderfully made, a sinner saved by the grace of One. All this has happened and lavished on me, even though I have a wounded heart, and have done childish things, He pauses to hear me and have a relationship with me. Jesus has never once misinterpreted my heart or assumed the worst on my behalf.

You see my whole life I have been pressured to look more, be more, act more like Jesus but when I began to understand the attraction that Jesus had for me. Instead of putting myself in the place o Jesus, I began to put myself in the spot of the sinner, where I belong. I began to realize that it is not what I do but what He does. I began to see how good He is. I finally realized that I am a sinner and that He is still attracted to me... imperfect me. And while the rest of the religious realm reports and perpetuates my old lifestyles and expects me to perform perfectly without their aid or understanding of Gods work in me, Jesus is taking something jaded and sinful, me, and He is perfecting me completely while I am still a sinner. He comes to my aid when no one else does.

So... Is it right for me to see myself in the place of the sinner? Aren't we commanded to be holy, in the way that He is holy?

John says that when we see Jesus, we shall be like Him without even trying (I John 3:2). When I stop trying to be like Him and start to simply like Him — simply enjoy spending time with Him — then I become like Him. And I rejoice in Him all the more.

Many who know me and are close to me know that I have stumbled badly. Others fail to see what was the original attraction of Jesus and will not make the effort to see restoration, cleansing and healing in the way that Jesus does even in spite of the fact that we have been given the ministry of reconciliation.

We should revisit Paul's words when he tells us that in our flesh dwells no good thing (Romans 7:18). I can only surmise that, if we're blown away or scandalized by a failure or temptation to which we or someone else succumbs, it only means that we have too much confidence in our own flesh. What a burden it must be to take on the responsibility of forgiveness, restoration, and salvation. Taking on a messiah complex by assuming authority or having so much confidence in our own righteousness that we then govern the grace and mercy of the God who turns the lame into leapers and has a righteous affair with every adulterer.

The truly spiritual man is one who realizes his weakness — but rather than getting all bent about it he says, 'If anything good comes through me or from me, it comes from Christ. I'm weak, but He is wonderful. And I rejoice in Him.' Truly free is the man who tells the story of his own depravity before those who are self-righteous have an opportunity to say 'That man is lame' or 'That man is a leper or adulterer'. Who am I, You ask? I am your worst nightmare and at the same time I am a sinner saved by grace, I have been redeemed and forgiven of all my sins (Col 1: 14), and I am complete in Christ (Col 2:10). I for one, will follow the same pattern that Christ gave so many examples of and Love you in the same way He loved me because you are just like me!

Spirituality that is real consists not in do's or don'ts, pain or piety, burdens or bondage. Paul says the spiritual man is one who worships God in the Spirit, he rejoices in one thing only and its Christ alone, and he has no confidence in his flesh.

It is in these things that I can rejoice gladly and celebrate continually because I truly am a sinner saved by his Grace!

I Hope You Croak!

Jesus was right when He said that we would have tribulation and that the way would be hard. It has been far harder than you or I may have ever expected! But, Jesus was right about something else. In Matthew 16:18 He says, "the gates of hell will not prevail." John 14:6 reads, "The way is hard, but the way is sure!"

By now, you may be getting a pretty firm grip on the obvious and have committed to go a few more rounds in the ring of hell, but don't miss the most simplistically profound statement of our faith that is found in the Bible. In John 1:1 it simply says The Way is the Word.

While many of us will go for years struggling in the mire of self-sufficiency, attempting to deal a deathblow to our enemy, the simple secret of simple faith, the great mystery is...ready for it? Die! Die, die, die, die, croak!

The Left Hook From Heaven

All the brutal forces of hell, with all the distortion it can conjure, disorientation it can cause, and suspicion it can sow, simply cannot break the Word of God. For that Word is God himself John 1:1. And, the Word came to destroy the works of the devil, 1 John 3:8.

The Stand In

It seems illogical that someone would take my place in the Octagon! But, the Word of God destroyed the works of the devil by being broken. Yes, all hell broke loose upon the Word of God in a ring that spanned from Gethsemane to Calvary and the Word was broken. It was for you and me that he took all of the arm bars, left hooks, take downs, and all the rest but He was not broken in the way that the enemy tried to break Him. The Enemy tried to compromise the Word, but the Word held fast by being broken, by being submitted. What the enemy didn't understand is that while Jesus was broken on the mat, he wasn't submitting to Satan, He was submitting to His Father!

The Dead Guy Wins!

Catch the simplicity now! In being broken, the Word of God kept unbroken the word of God, the great covenant. Justice was upheld when Christ

stood in the ring for me and became both “just and the justifier of the one who has simple faith in Jesus.”

Romans 3:26. (KJV)

To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

That Word, otherwise known as “Jesus Death-Blow Christ,” stands above all earthly powers and smashes against the gates of hell. Things may be hard for us. But Jesus, the Word, the Way, will pour out His wrath on our enemy - literally hell for hell.

The key to our clarity in the face of the enemy’s distortion, focus in the face of hell’s disorientation, and our persevering, long-suffering love in the face of our adversary’s suspicion, is to listen to the Word of God by soaking in the words of God in the Bible. The Word is our refuge, Psalm 18:30; the Word is our peace, Acts 10:36, Philippians 4:7; and the Word is our weapon, Ephesians 6:17. Scripture declares we are dead in Him and resurrected into a new life with Him.

Join the Resistance!

We must remember that the devil is after one thing: our faith. And we must remember that we will overcome him by one thing: our faith, 1 John 5:4. Jesus summarized our one and supreme defense against hell in this statement: “believe in God; believe also in me” John 14:1.

Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him; be firm in the simple belief in the faith of Jesus. This faith is not yours but is His faith in you. Know that everyone around you is experiencing the same kind of suffering. And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will Himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.

1 Peter 5:8-10 (KJV)

8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

9 Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

10 But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.

Now, Grace and Peace be multiplied unto you!

Assignment

Remember! The Battle belongs to the Lord, that is what makes it a good fight and it's ok to die! Stay on the mat and in the Word!

Chapter 8

The Simple Jesus

Understanding How Jesus Has Made it sooo...Simple!

More Simpler Please!

We have a basic understanding now of how Justification is by simple faith or belief in the Lord. Our justification comes from our being linked to Jesus Christ personally. We know that the Righteousness of God comes by the faith of Jesus, not by my profound faith.

It is so freeing to finally come to grips with this fact and dispel the misnomer that it had something to do with me. To the contrary, it is His faith in me and His faithfulness towards me. In fact, it has nothing to do with me at all!. We have been freed from trying to substantiate our faith. Hallelujah!

Now If that doesn't do it for you then... Propitiation!!! "What?" You say!

Jesus Put a Lid On It!

God Himself became a Man and absorbed the wrath of His own indignation. The mystery of the Trinity, the mystery of propitiation is that God actually inflicted death on a cross upon Himself.

Now we won't go into the deep theological perspectives of grace, justification, and propitiation here. Let's not forget, I too am a commoner, a sinner. That being said, the custom of many is to dissect Romans in such a way that we will get bogged down in theological debate rather than simple application. So, allow me at this point to throw out this one big word for a moment and define propitiation so it is simple to apply to a common pinhead such as myself.

The word *Hilasterion*, or “propitiation”—A word we don’t hear much today—is used only five times in the entire New Testament: Romans 3:25; 1 John 2:1–2; 1 John 4:10; and Hebrews 9 are four of them. The Hebrews reference is really cool because it gives us insight and understanding. You see, in describing the mercy seat, the author of Hebrews uses the word *hilasterion*. The mercy seat, or *hilasterion*, covered the ark of the covenant. It was like a lid. The ark of the covenant contained the law. Now, this is where it gets interesting because, through the mercy seat, God says, I know you’ve broken the law. I know you deserve to be consumed because of it. But I’m going to put a lid on it through the sacrifice of My Son. *He* is the *helasmos*, the mercy seat, the propitiation. It’s not something He gives. It’s who He is!

Whoa!... This is Melting My Brain!

If you are getting what I’m laying down then you now understand that Jesus has come between you and the broken law. The wrath that the Father should have vented on me and you was instead placed upon His Son, who died in your place.

Now take a few moments to wrap your brain around that and then continue reading.

The fifth use of the word “propitiation” is found in Luke 18:10–14. It is a brief illustration, concerning the prayers of a Pharisee and a tax collector. If you look at verse 13: “God, be merciful to me a sinner.” It begins with “God” and ends with “sinner.” The middle phrase, “be merciful”—the verb form of *hilasterion* stands between God and sin. Every one of us is in one of two categories. You’re either the self-righteous Pharisee, or you’re the tax collector, grateful that Jesus is standing between God and your sin.

When I first began to understand the work of propitiation I finally gave in and gave up on the idea that something I was doing would appease the wrath of a Righteous Judge. Propitiation adds an entirely different dimension to what Paul calls “so great salvation” (Hebrews 2:3). It’s not just the Father saying, “I’m going to settle mankind’s problem judicially.” No, He deals with it personally. That God would love me so much He would actually become the object of His own wrath frees me up in a profound way. Not only did He put a lid on it, He became the lid!

I know I'm a sinner. But because He absorbed the anger that should have been poured out upon me, I can walk throughout the rest of my days, weeks, and years because I am a commoner, a sinner and the recipient of His incomprehensible love.

Need help applying this?

Assignment

Tomorrow when you wake up, It won't take long for your adversary the Devil to begin to accuse you. He may come in many forms and is highly distinguishable because he never encourages, he never has a solution, and he never leads you to the cross. Anything or anyone who comes to you and meets that criteria should be promptly introduced to the new Adversary of your Enemy. Let Him put a lid on it! Meanwhile you can be free!

Chapter 9

It is Finished!

The Work and The Book!

John 19:30 (KJV)

When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

The words Jesus spoke from the Cross, “It is Finished” Are the most powerfully impacting words in all of scripture! This proclamation to the world, to the enemy and to you and me are the defining moment in history where Christ, in essence, looks all of us straight in the eye and says You’re off the hook, you are free, free from fear, free from death, free from sin and its condemnation! My obedience is finished and perfect, and you need it. My suffering is finished, and you need it to cover all your sins. I have finished removing the wrath of God from my people. I have finished striking Satan with a death blow.

These words come from the word Tetelestai and the verb teleo, which means “to bring to an end, to complete, to accomplish.” It’s a crucial word because it signifies the successful end to a particular course of action. It’s the word you would use when you climb to the peak of Mt Pitt; it’s the word you would use when you turn in the final copy of your dissertation; it’s the word you would use when you make the final payment on your new car; it’s the word you use when you cross the finish line of your first race. The word means more than just “I survived.” It means, “I did exactly what I set out to do and what the Father sent me to do.”

But there’s more here than the verb itself. Tetelestai is in the perfect tense in Greek. That’s significant because the perfect tense speaks of an action which has been completed in the past with results continuing into the present. This is where it gets really good! It’s different from the past tense which looks

back to an event and says, “This happened.” The perfect tense adds the idea that, “This happened and it is still in effect today.”

When Jesus cried out, “It is finished,” He meant, “It was finished in the past, it is still finished in the present, and it will remain finished in the future.” He did not say, “I am finished, I’m exhausted, or I give up.” That would imply that he died defeated. Rather, he cried out, “It is finished,” meaning, “I successfully completed the work I came to do.” Tetelestai is the Savior’s final cry of victory. When he died, he left no unfinished business behind. When he said, “It is finished,” he was speaking the truth.

Why does everything hinge on this one statement, this one final moment in the life of Jesus and this final chapter in this book? It is because this is where Jesus, with finality, brings simplicity and communion into our faith and walk with God. It is Finished! There is nothing left for you to do! He has bridged the gap, provided freedom from sin, and justified us before our Heavenly Father, all while we were yet sinners, He died for us.

Would you be free from the burden of sin? Would you be finished with pride and self-righteousness. Would you be free to rest in the work that Christ has made simple, and has provided freely and completely for those who would simply believe?

Assignment

- Walk on in the simplicity of Jesus Christ because anything else is your work and your work is hard work!
- Be free In Jesus’ Name!

John Fairrington; Commoner, Sinner, Saved by Grace!

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What a privilege it has turned out to be, to have parents who have occasionally stumbled through life and kept the faith anyway!

For You

THIS BOOK FOR THE PURPOSE OF YOUR OWN PERSONAL
ENCOURAGEMENT, TO EXAMINE YOURS AND MY STORY AND TO DISCERN
WHETHER THEY BARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF SIMPLE FAITH.

Some of you show up in the credits of this book, there are many others who are
unmentioned that have been a wonderful influence in my life. I value your
contribution to my life and story.

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